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THE GERMAN COLONY AND LUTHERAN CHURCH IN MAINE.

AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

Historical Society

OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH,

AT ITS MEETING IN

Washington, D. C., May 14th, 1869.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST OF THE SOCIETY.

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GETTYSBURG:

J. E. WIBLE, PRINTER, NORTH-EAST COR. OF WASHINGTON & R. R. STS.

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Dr. C. C. Cooper

ADDRESS.

On Monday, the 7th of October, 1860, taking advantage of my usual vacation, I left my residence in Albany, to make a visit to one of the ancient Churches of our faith, in the far East. This church had been in connection with the Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium of New York, for nearly half a century. But its aged pastor, by reason of the distance, and his growing infirmities, had only occasionally been present at our annual conventions. He had now for some time been superannuated, and for two years his voice had been unheard in the sanctuary; although, in his own humble dwelling, he still continued, from time to time, to minister to the spiritual wants of his beloved people.

But notwithstanding these ministrations, his flock were literally as sheep without a shepherd, and the consequences may be easily imagined. Some of the younger members, as is usual in towns situated on the coast, went down to the sea in ships, to behold God's wonders in the deep, and were lost to the Church. Many were scattered abroad in other directions, and being brought under stronger denominational influences, were gathered into other folds, so that only a feeble remnant remained.

But this remnant, "faithful among the faithless," remembering how in time past, they had taken sweet counsel together, and gone to the house of God in company, longed for the services of a minister, who could go in and out among them, to lead them into the green pastures, and by the still waters of God's ordinances, and to feed them with the bread of eternal life. These earnest longings were made known to the Ministerium, from time to time; and at length, their persistent cry, that we should come over and help them, induced the Synod to appoint me as its representative to visit them, and by personal observation to ascertain their condition, and, if possible, to provide for their necessities.

In the fulfillment of this commission, I had left my pleasant home, and God having prospered me on my way; at the end of a three days journey, I found myself on the banks of the Muscongus, and in the humble dwelling of the aged Pastor.

Of that Pastor, and the people to whom he ministered, I would speak to you to-night; and I trust that what I have to communicate of what I saw on that occasion; and what I have since learned of the Lutheran Church in Maine, may serve to increase your veneration for those early pioneers of civilization and Christianity, though I despair to convey even a faint idea of the privations and sufferings of this excellent people, in their protracted struggle to found a colony, and establish the Church of their fathers, in those eastern wilds. But before I proceed with the history of the settlement of these colonists, it may be necessary to say a few words in relation to the country they had selected as their future home.

Almost midway between the mouth of the lovely Kennebeck, and of that main artery of the lumber trade, the Penobscot, on what is now the line of Lincoln and Hancock counties, in the State of Maine, the ocean forms a deep and spacious Bay, appropriately named Broad. Into this Bay flows the little river Muscongus, on whose left bank stands the present town of Waldoborough. All the lands in this region, to the extent of thirty miles square, sterile in soil, though heavily wooded, were by original patent, dated March 2nd, 1630, granted by the Council of Plymouth to John Beauchamp of London, and Thomas Leverett of Boston, England. On the death of Beauchamp, Leverett succeeded to the estate. In 1719, John Leverett, who was then President of Harvard College, representing himself as sole heir of his grandfather, according to the English laws of primogeniture, came into possession of the whole patent.

But an emergency arising, Leverett associated with himself ten of his friends, and afterwards twenty others entered into the partnership, which gave the company the appellation of the Thirty Proprietors.

After the treaty of Utrecht, a difficulty arose which threatened the extinguishment of the claims of the Thirty Proprietors, in consequence of which they were induced to engage the services of Brig. Gen. Samuel Waldo, to effect an adjustment of the case. Proceeding to England, Waldo succeeded, by untiring application at court, in accomplishing the object of his mission; and, on his return, the Thirty Proprietors joined in surrendering to him, for his services, one-half of the patent.*

It was on these lands, originally called the Muscongus, and afterwards from the circumstances I have mentioned,

* Maine His. Soc. Collect. vol. VI, p. 321—322.

the Waldo patent, and but a short distance from where Broad Bay spreads its ample bosom to the waters of the Atlantic, that a few German emigrants located in 1739. They were supposed to have come over in the summer, or autumn of that year, on board of a vessel which brought letters of marque and reprisal from the king of England, against the subjects of Spain.†

To the few families which composed the original settlement large accessions were made in 1740, when forty other families from Brunswick and Saxony, tempted by the imposing offers which the indefatigable Waldo, when in Europe had made and caused to be circulated in their language, arrived at Broad Bay. These settlers were unable to speak a word of the English language, and consequently could hold little intercourse, and gain but little aid from their English neighbors. They had been accustomed to seeing farms enclosed with fences; and were inexperienced in the clearing up of new lands. Their progress in agriculture was slow; their crops were injured by wild beasts, and the cattle that strayed from the neighboring settlements; and they suffered incredible hardships. They had been induced to leave Germany by the promise of one hundred acres of land; a supply of provisions for a given number of years; and the maintenance of a Gospel minister. They complained much of disappointment in these promises; for even when kept to the ear, they were broken to the hope. Their lots were laid out but twenty-five rods wide, and ran back into the wilderness two miles in length. This was an inconvenient shape for a farm, but they were easily reconciled to it at the time, as it brought their dwellings in close proximity. But the soil was hard, and covered with an unbroken forest, haunted by unknown beasts of prey, and strange and savage men.

There was then no fort, block house, or place of retreat in case of a hostile attack, no grist mill nearer than St. George's, or Damariscotta, to grind their scanty crops of "rochen," the only grain they raised, and which was generally prepared for cooking by merely bruising at home. Sighing for their fatherland, but unable to return, they despairingly lingered out the tedious years. But sad as was their present condition, greater evils were at hand. The war, in which England was then engaged with Spain, began now to assume an alarming aspect; and the growing apprehensions, that France was about to take sides with Spain in the contest, and the certainty that her sub-

† Amer. Quar. Reg. vol. XIII, p. 162.

jects would persuade the Indians to join them, awakened fears, such as they never before experienced.

It is true, the Legislature of Massachusetts, of which Maine then formed a part, endeavored to prepare for the strife, by appropriating seventy-five pounds for the defence of Broad Bay. But this contributed but little to disperse the universal gloom, and soon their worst fears were realized. France declared war on the 15th of March, 1744, and immediately commenced hostilities.*

War, always to be deprecated, becomes still more sanguinary when carried on by ignorant mercenaries, at all times eager for plunder, and delighting in blood. And it was against such foes the infant colony had to contend. Nor was it long before they felt the full measure of their vengeance. The Eastern and Canadian Indians taking sides with the French, as they usually did, fell upon the defenceless outpost, determined to extirpate the young settlement at a single blow. And they were but too successful in their assault. In the month of May, 1746, they made their stealthy approach; and soon a heap of ashes was all that remained of the habitations of the peaceful settlers, many of whom were cruelly murdered, while the remainder were carried away captive either to Canada, or into the forest fastnesses of their ruthless foes.

This savage act put an end, for the time, to the settlement of the Germans at Broad Bay, and the whole country in the neighborhood remained a barren waste, until after the treaty of peace at Aix la Chapelle, Oct. 7th, 1748. "About this time, the tragic story of the original settlers' fate, or some other incident, turned the thoughts of other Germans in the fatherland, towards the same region, as an abiding place. Sympathies have strong attractions, and the soil that had drunk in the blood of their martyred brethren, was to them consecrated ground."† So says the historian. But I am rather inclined to think that the flattering representations of Gen. Waldo, who was persistent in his attempts to settle his patent, had far more influence over the minds of the phlegmatic Germans than the blood of their martyred brethren. And I am confirmed in this opinion by the fact, that early in 1750 Mr. Crelleus, who is described as a "German gentleman," made a voyage across the Atlantic, it is said, "on an errand of enquiry;"

* Eaton's Annals of Warren, p. 61—62.

† Amer. Quart. Register, vol. XIII, p. 162.

but in reality to make terms for the proper settlement of his fellow countrymen.

On his arrival, he presented a memorial to the General Court of Massachusetts, in which he proposed to remove a considerable number of Protestant families from his own country to this, provided sufficient inducements were offered, and a favorable prospect opened for their permanent establishment and prosperity. This encouragement was cheerfully afforded them.

In the following year (1751,) between twenty and thirty families came over with Mr. Etter their interpreter, among whom the earliest birth was that of Conrad Heyer, who at the time of my visit was still living, at the age of more than a hundred years, and of whom I shall have occasion to speak again before I conclude.

But the time of the arrival of this little colony was rather unfortunate, as they were landed on the sterile coast of Maine, in the latter part of the month of November, just as the severe winter of that climate was setting in. New England hospitality, however, provided them with both a welcome and a shelter. The General Court of Massachusetts with great unanimity passed an act, contributing to their necessities, and private charity was not remiss in its ministrations. Beds and bedding and other articles were liberally furnished to secure them from the inclemency of the weather, until the opening spring permitted them to reach their future home, and join the remnant of their brethren, who during the war, had fled with their families to the Fort at Louisburg for protection, but had now returned to their old possessions at Broad Bay, and on the banks of the Muscongus.

Thus, under more favorable auspices, was the German settlement at Waldoborough revived; and the future once more looked bright and promising.

Taking advantage of this hopeful beginning, General Waldo determined to persevere until he had secured the permanent establishment upon his patent of a large and flourishing community. To this end he sent his son to Germany, who published in the newspapers, and scattered, far and wide, a circular, offering the most flattering inducements to the simple-minded peasantry to emigrate to this modern El Dorado. A copy of this circular has lately come to light, and has been translated and published by the Maine Historical Society.* It is truly a remarkable

* Maine Hist. Soc. Collect. Vol. VI, pp., 329—30.

document; and as rich in promises, as if it had emanated from the prolific brain of some wily emigrant runner of the present day. After dwelling in magniloquent terms upon the desirableness of the location, the salubrity of the climate and the fertility of the soil, it provides to those who will of their own accord settle in Broad Bay, that they shall dwell together in certain divisions, consisting of one hundred and twenty families: and *promises*, that to every such district there shall be given to the church two hundred acres; to the first preacher settling among them, two hundred; to the school two hundred; and to each of the one hundred and twenty families one hundred acres, equal to more than one hundred and twenty German measurement. And this land, provided they dwell upon it seven years either in person, or by substitute, shall be guaranteed to them, their heirs and assigns forever; without their having to make the slightest recompense, or pay any interest for it. It provides that unmarried persons of twenty-one years and upwards, who embrace these offers, and venture to build upon their land, shall also receive one hundred acres, and be regarded as a family. Each district shall enjoy the protection of the laws; and so soon as it is organized, shall be entitled to send a deputy to the General Court. The colonists shall be obliged neither to bear arms nor carry on war, but in case war should arise, they would be protected by the government, and the free exercise of all Protestant religions will be guaranteed.

It promises, moreover, that there shall be given to the colonists on their arrival necessary support, for from four to six months, according as they arrive early or late in the season; and, furthermore, that if one or two Protestant preachers, having good testimonials, and unmarried, whose care is the salvation of souls, should resolve to trust to Providence, and the good will of Samuel Waldo, to go forth immediately with the rest, they shall receive, besides their free passage, a little supply of fifteen pounds sterling, out of the capital of the Company; and boards for the first church, which is to be built, shall also be given, and delivered to them.

It is further stated, that the first families going thither, although there should be several hundreds of them, they can all select their residences either in a sea-port, or on navigable rivers, where they can cut wood into cords for burning, or into timber for building material, and convey it to the shore, where it can always be taken of them by

ships, for ready money, and carried to Boston, or other cities; and from thence, whatever they need will be brought back in return, at a reasonable rate.

It considerably adds, in conclusion, that by these means the people will not only be able at once to support themselves, until the land is fit for cultivation, but, also, are freed from the trouble and expense of making wagons, and traveling by land, to which difficulties, it is well known Pennsylvania is subjected.

This imposing document is dated March 23rd, 1753, and published by authority of the Royal British Captain Waldo, hereditary Lord of Broad Bay, Massachusetts, and was soon followed by its desired results; for no less than sixty families immediately accepted its munificent offers; and we are told by the Hon. Wm. D. Williamson, the historian of Maine, that afterwards, as many as fifteen hundred Germans, encouraged by its representations, emigrated from time to time, and settled on the Patent of this self-styled hereditary Lord.

How his promises were fulfilled, is matter of history, and will be seen as we follow these sixty families to their destination. They arrived there in the month of September, and were put into a large shed, which had been erected near the shore. This shed was sixty feet long, without chimneys, and utterly unfit for human habitation; yet, here these destitute exiles, neglected by their patron, whose promises, in this instance, were wholly unfulfilled, dragged out a winter of almost inconceivable suffering. Many froze to death, many perished with hunger, or diseases, induced by their privations. The old settlers were too poorly supplied themselves, to afford much assistance to the new comers, who were fain to work for a quart of buttermilk a day; and considered it quite a boon, when they could gain a quart of meal for twelve or sixteen hours' work. They sought for employment, also, at Damariscotta and St George's, and many of the children were put to service in those settlements. Some of them were not destitute of money, for it is a tradition, that of the three school masters, who emigrated with them, one was so wealthy and, in consequence, so arbitrary, that on any dispute arising, when arguments failed, he used to threaten to knock down his opponent with a bag of Johannes. But such was the scarcity of provisions, that even those, who had money, were unable to procure them. They were unacquainted, also, with hunting and fishing, for this, in their

own native land, had been the privilege of their Lords, and, therefore, they were unable to avail themselves of this source of supply.

Thus, in privation and suffering they passed the dreary winter months; and it was not until the following spring, that Waldo appointed an agent, Charles Leistner, to allot to them the promised lands, and deal out the provisions, which should have been distributed on their first arrival. Leistner was a man of education, exercised the powers of a magistrate, and should have protected them from imposition, but he did not entirely escape the murmurs of the settlers, who, in their privations and jealousy, accused him, perhaps without any foundation, of selling, for his own benefit, the provisions which had been furnished for them; and, in the allotment of their farms, he certainly treated them with great injustice. Instead of the hundred acres of land promised them on the sea coast, where wood would bring four shillings a cord, this agent took them back two miles into the heart of the wilderness, and there, perhaps, from fear of Indian hostilities, assigned them only a half an acre each, in a compact cluster. Here they were constrained to build their huts, carrying up boards, and covering their roofs with bark, in the best manner they were able.

But these evils were light, compared with the baptism of blood which awaited them, and which they were soon afterwards called upon to endure. For, scarcely had a year elapsed, when, in addition to their other discomfords, a band of Indians, instigated by the Romish French, fell upon the defenceless colonists, and the tomahawk and scalping knife did their bloody work. Many were barbarously slain, and others carried away captive. Little record remains of their individual sufferings, but any one, acquainted with the history of the period, knows how cruel were even the tender mercies of the Indians, and may easily imagine the untold horrors of their fate.

Such outrages led to the second French war, which was declared in June, 1756, during which, for seven long years, great hardships were endured by the colonists, and much distress occasioned by the want of provisions. Those who were able to do military duty, for the most part, enlisted under Jacob Leistner, who had been appointed Captain of a scouting party, and had charge of the stockade, or block house, which had been erected for the defence of the set-

tlement. These were the favored ones, for they drew regular pay and rations, which formed the principle support for their families. But the great majority were left in extreme destitution. The *Annalist* tells us of one family, "who subsisted a whole winter on frost fish, with only four quarts of meal; and many a German woman was glad to do a hard day's work at planting or hoeing, for eight pence, or a quart of buttermilk.

And now, (February 10th, 1763,)

"Grim visag'd war had smoothed his wrinkled front,"

and "piping times of peace" returned, but not to the harassed colonists at Waldoborough. For scarcely had the din of battle died away, before this quiet and excellent people were perplexed with troubles from another, and entirely unexpected quarter. A flaw in the title to their lands had been discovered by some mousing speculator, and one of the evils, which so often befalls the unsuspecting emigrant, was now upon them, with all its distracting anxieties.

From the report of a Committee, to whom the matter had been referred, and which was adopted by the Legislature of Massachusetts, February 23rd, 1762, it appeared that Gen. Waldo (to say the least, and to put the most charitable construction upon his conduct,) labored under an erroneous impression, as to the extent of his Patent. Its true boundaries were the Penobscot on the East, and the Muscongus on the West; and, consequently, all the inhabitants on the western bank of the latter river (and these constituted the greater part of the colonists,) were without any title to their lands. True, they had deeds from General Waldo; but of what avail were these, when the General's right of ownership was invalidated. And now, what their enemies, the Indians, had spared, was liable to be taken from them by their so-called friends. They were about to loose, not only their farms, buildings and improvements, and be turned out of doors; but their Church property was in danger, for this, also, was on the litigated territory, as well as the humble temple in which they worshipped God, in the language, and after the time-honored custom of their fathers. In this dilemma, the troubled settlers, to the number of sixty or seventy families, purchased their lands anew, in 1763—64, and received other, and as they supposed satisfactory deeds from Mr. Thomas

Drowne, in behalf of the Pennaquid Company, which had established its title to them, under the patent granted by the Plymouth Council, to two merchants of Bristol, Robert Aldsworth and Gyles Elbridge, dated February 20th, 1631.

To the honor of this Company, it ought to be stated, that the settlers "were allowed to retain the lots assigned them by Waldo for public uses; and deeds were given them of one hundred acres for a meeting house; one hundred acres for the ministry; and one lot of twenty-five acres, and another of forty-one, for the support of schools."

But even this purchase did not avail to secure them quiet possession of their property. For, soon afterwards, "a possessory right," called "the Brown claim," was raised to the same lands, in virtue of ancient settlement and occupancy; and numerous depositions were taken to establish this title, to the no small alarm and perplexity of this honest and persecuted people.

Nor were the settlers on the other, or Eastern bank of the river, without serious trials and embarrassments. They had made improvements on certain portions of land within the acknowledged Waldo patent, but, either through ignorance or inadvertency, had obtained no deeds from the General before his sudden death from apoplexy near Fort Pownal, in 1759, and were, therefore, seriously molested by his heirs, who claimed under him, among whom was General Knox, who afterwards became so famous during our Revolutionary struggle. Thus were these honest, unsuspecting Germans harrassed by the harpies of the law, contrary to every principle of justice and good faith, and left, with no remedy for their grievances, and without the least remuneration or indemnity for their losses.

Justly indignant at such persistent ill-treatment and injury, disappointed in their expectations, displeased with the climate, and determined to be rid of interminable lawsuits, it is no wonder that a large number of families resolved to abandon the settlement and to seek for a more desirable residence. Accordingly many of the settlers sold their estates for what they would bring, (which, in many instances, was but a miserable pittance,) and, in 1773, removed from Maine to join their German brethren, who three years before, under the advice and guidance of the Rev. Mr. Cilly, a Moravian clergyman, had emigrated to Carolina, and effected a settlement in that more genial

clime. By this emigration, according to two authorities,* the colony lost not less than three hundred families, including many of its most skilful husbandmen, and estimable citizens. It is hardly credible, however, that so many could have been spared, at so early a period, without depopulating the place. But, whether this account be exaggerated or not, the loss was soon made up. For the Germans, like the rest of the Teutons, are a clannish race, and upon "a second serious, sober thought," many of them concluded that it was far better to retrace their steps and "bear the ills they had," than to remain among comparative strangers, and "suffer others that they knew not of," especially as the rumblings of the storm, which was soon to burst upon the Colonies, were now beginning to be heard. The great majority of them, therefore, returned, though the expense incurred, and the loss of time, had greatly increased their indigence. But they were received with joyful hearts, and many a helping hand was extended towards them, as they quietly settled down again amongst their former friends and neighbors.

During the struggle which led to the separation of the Colonies from the mother country, which shortly followed, they bore their part manfully, and endured, in common with the rest of the colonists, their full share of the privations and sufferings incident to a state of warfare, though they were not, as on former occasions, subject to the incursions of the Indians. And when peace dawned upon the land, they cheerfully returned to their usual avocations, and busily occupied themselves in the tilling of the soil. For they were essentially a farming community, and but few had as yet turned their attention to any, save the most common of the mechanic arts.

Hitherto, the settlement had consisted principally of Germans, and of the children who were born unto them. But after the close of the war of the Revolution, the facilities for ship building, afforded by the Muscongus river, and its vicinity to the waters of the Broad Cove and Bay, began to attract the attention of the descendants of the Puritans, a proverbially active and enterprising race, and soon a village sprang into existence, at the head of navigation on the eastern bank, and the population became materially changed. But the Germans still adhered to

* Holmes' Amer. An. Williamson His. Ma.

their own language, and to the customs of their fathers, and particularly to their ancient faith. They were originally from different parts of Germany, and consisted for the most part of those who adopted the Augsburg Confession for their creed; but among them were many of the followers of Zwinglius, and some few of the Moravians, or United Brethren. But they were all of one mind, as to the necessity of establishing public worship, and paying a due regard to the institutions of Christianity; and, therefore, no sooner had they erected their huts, than they endeavored to provide a fit habitation for the mighty God of Jacob. This humble temple was built of logs, occupied a central position near the Cove, and was furnished with all the conveniences their scanty resources could supply. Here, though destitute of a regular clergyman, they constantly assembled from Sabbath to Sabbath, for public worship. At these meetings, John Ulmer, one of the principle men among them, took the lead, and acted as their minister, and as such was paid by Waldo, until the settlement was broken up by the incursion of the Indians in 1746. Upon the revival of the colony three years later, he continued to labor in the same vocation, and after the death of Leistner, he appears to have acted in the triple capacity of priest, prince and military commander. Of the distinction thus conferred upon him he was not a little vain; nor was he slow in asserting his claims, and in exacting on all occasions due honor and respect. For, we are told, that visiting the neighboring settlement of Pennaquad, towards the close of the second French war, and hailing the people in the dusk of the evening to set him across the river, in answer to the inquiry who he was, he gave his name with such a string of titles, that they expected to find a large number of persons; and were much disappointed when they found all these honors borne by a single individual. *

This state of things continued until 1762, when the Rev. John Martin Schaeffer, who is described, I know not on what authority, as belonging to the German Lutheran Church, came from New York to Boston, and was invited by some of the inhabitants of Broad Bay to become their pastor; and John Ulmer's occupation, as the ministerial office, was gone. But from all accounts the mild government and harmless vanity of the one was but ill exchanged

* Eaton's Annals of Warren, p. 115.

for the bold exactions and mean selfishness of the other ; for according to the concurrent testimony of the period, Schaeffer's "character was not so adorned with graces, as to entitle his portrait to a place among the apostles of rectitude and reform."**

Shortly after his arrival, he organized a church in two branches, Lutheran and German Reformed. This church consisted of sixty or seventy communicant members, each of whom contributed to his support, in addition to the use of the glebe, three pounds old tenor, a bushel of corn, and two days work annually. He also, received, according to the custom of those primitive times, (a custom not altogether extinct in some of our German congregations, even to the present day,) half a dollar for the baptism of each child ; a like sum for each person confirmed ; and a dollar for attending every funeral. But not satisfied with his income as a minister, he practised as a physician also, and gained much fame, as well as wealth, by letting blood, applying blisters, and physicing the public generally. He was applied to, by numbers from the neighboring towns, and was considered by the common people everywhere, as having no equal. He made his people believe it was necessary to be bled every spring, for which he received a regular fee of fifty cents for each inhabitant. These emoluments, with such advantages as his property, influence and education, enabled him to take, in making bargains, soon rendered him opulent. And as the love of lucre grows by what it feeds on, he was no longer content with the profits derived from preaching and the practice of medicine ; but engaged in navigation, receiving the lumber and wood of the illiterate Germans, on commission, to sell in Boston, and always taking out his own demands from the proceeds, and liquidating the amounts in his own way. Many a poor man had to work a week for him, to pay for the annual loss of blood in himself and family ; and when any considerable sickness occurred, a sloop's hold, full of wood went to pay the doctor's bill. As his wealth increased, all restraint was thrown off, and his vices appeared without a blush. He was very profane, grew intemperate, and though an eloquent preacher, gradually lost all influence as a minister. But this gave him little, or no concern ;

* Amer. Quart. Register, vol. XIII, p. 164.

for when remonstrated with, by his people, for his improper behaviour, he was accustomed to excuse himself by saying: "When I have my plack coat on, den I am a minister, and you must do as I *say*, but when I have my green coat on, den I am a toctor, and I can do as I please."*

Thus, did this wolf in sheep's clothing continue to fleece, with impunity, his defenceless flock. "But the triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment." And it may be mentioned, as a striking instance of retributive justice, that while residing in the neighboring town of Warren, to which he removed in after years, and where he continued his medical practice, and in addition, took out a license to retail spirituous liquors, for which he himself was the best customer. His house, during his temporary absence in Boston, was entered in the dead of night, by four men in disguise, who seized the women, the only inmates, pinioned their arms, confined them in the cellar, broke open the chests and closets, containing his hoards of silver and gold, and stripped him of all his ill-gotten gains. Every attempt to discover the burglars, or to recover the stolen treasure, was unavailing; and the miserable wretch, in rage and despair, plunging still deeper into intemperance, died as the fool dieth, and "made no sign."†

It is said this miserable man was pastor of the church for nearly twenty years; but it is hardly credible, that the great body of the congregation, should have endured his ministrations so long, and it is more than probable, that the number of his adherents was but few. Indeed, it is matter of record, that in 1767, the Rev. Mr Cilly, a pious Moravian clergyman, came from Germany to Broad Bay, who, being a more spiritual-minded man, and exemplifying in his life and conduct the reality of the doctrine he preached, drew away and converted to the Moravian faith many of the settlers, who, in 1770, removed with him to Carolina, and joined a similar society there.‡ And we have positive testimony, that the church was without a pastor in 1774.

Among the old documents at Hartwick Seminary, there is a call, dated May 28th, 1774, addressed to the Rev.

* Eaton's Annals of Warren, p. 116—17.

† April 20th, 1794.

‡ Eaton's Annals of Warren, p. 134.

John Christopher Hartwick, *pro tem.* pastor of the church at Boston, and superintendent of sundry Evangelical congregations, scattered up and down in America;” which describes the church at Waldoborough, as being “like sheep without a shepherd, destitute of the ministry of the Gospel, and scattered, and fainting for want of spiritual pasture, to the great detriment of its spiritual state.” It moreover informed him, that he had been unanimously elected pastor, and earnestly entreated him to become their spiritual guide. Nay, so anxious were the people to secure the services of a pastor, that they furthermore empowered Hartwick, in the event of his being unable to accept their call, to select any person whom he should deem suitable for the position, and unanimously agreed to abide by his decision. In compliance with this call, it is known that Hartwick visited Waldoborough, and performed ministerial duties there in July 1774, but whether he remained with them for any length of time, is extremely doubtful, as he was proverbially fond of change. At any rate, there is no further record of his ministry.

The next we hear of the congregation, is in 1785, when a Mr. Croner appears to have been its pastor. But during his ministry, which continued four years, no progress was made in the life of godliness, and nothing accomplished for the Redeemer’s kingdom; for, according to the record, “he was an evil example to his flock, a reproach to the ministry, and an injury to souls.”* Whether this Croner was ever regularly inducted into the ministry, is extremely problematical; and from all accounts he appears to have been one of that class of imposters, with which our Church has been so much cursed in the past, and from which every lover of our Zion ought earnestly to pray, that she may be delivered in the future.

But Providence had better things in store for this long suffering, and oft deceived people. Taught by bitter experience, not to trust in every adventurer, who represented himself to be a Lutheran minister, they sought advice from the Synod of Pennsylvania, and thereby obtained the services of a pastor, who more than compensated them for all the disappointments of the past. For the Rev. Augustus Ferdinand Rity, who, upon the recommendation of that Synod, was called in 1795, was not only a man of piety

* Amer. Quart. Register, vol. XIII, p. 164.

and learning, but, unlike his predecessors, had the interest of the Redeemer's kingdom much at heart, and was deeply imbued with the love of souls. He was a native of Germany, and educated at the University of Helmstadt; had been in this country about a year, during which, he was pastor of four small congregations, within the bounds of the Pennsylvania Synod, of which he was a member; and now undertook to serve the church at Waldoborough, for the annual salary of two hundred and twenty dollars, and the use of a hundred acres of land. Like his predecessors, he preached in the German language exclusively, and when first called upon by the neighboring clergy, being unacquainted with the English, was able to converse with them only in Latin; though afterwards, as he became better acquainted with this country, and its institutions, he was one of the few German ministers, who had the good sense to advise his parishioners to abandon their German schools, and give their children an English education; and had his sensible advice been followed, we should not have been obliged to record, to night, the decline and final extinction of the Lutheran Church in Maine. It is said, by his cotemporaries, that Mr. Rity was remarkably sedate in his deportment, and rarely indulged in anything that would excite a smile; and that the nearest approach to levity he ever exhibited, was in the case of Mr. Demuth, one of his parishioners. This man had in some way taken offence at his pastor, (a common occurrence in ministerial experience,) and refused to speak to him. Mr. Rity, in company with a friend, passing him one day, in the usual manner, without receiving a nod, the friend observed: "There goes Mr. Demuth." "Nein, Nein," said the minister, *nicht Meister Demuth, Meister Hochmuth.*"* But this was an exception, for otherwise he was

"Affectionate in look
And tender in address, as well became
A messenger of grace to guilty men—"

"Much impress'd
Himself, as conscious of his awful charge,
And mainly anxious that the flock he fed
Should feel it too."

And much did he need these gifts and graces, for he had

* Eaton's Annals of Warren, p: 271.

hard work to perform, many thorns and briars to remove, and a field to cultivate, which had long lain waste, and brought forth no fruit unto righteousness. But he was fully qualified for the task, and he labored not alone, for God was with him, and gave him many souls for his hire, and as his crown of rejoicing. He was only too soon removed from the toils of his spiritual husbandry on earth, to reap the glorious rewards of the heavenly harvest home. For he suddenly expired, after a sixteen years' ministry, in 1811; and devout men, with saddened hearts, carried him to his burial, universally lamented by all who knew him, both Americans and Germans, leaving behind a reputation, as his biographer quaintly remarks: "Like an array of gems which never fade."

And, now, the widowed church was again without a pastor, but she did not sit long overwhelmed with grief, bemoaning her desolate condition; for God heard her cry, and sent her in the autumn of 1812, and in the person of the Rev. John William Starman, a teacher to go before her, as a pillar of cloud and of fire, to direct her by day and by night. The aged German Christians of Waldoborough, hailed his coming with delight, and wept for joy, that once more before their death, they could sit and listen in their own language, to the words of heavenly wisdom, to edify their minds, and kindle into new life their religious zeal. I said, the *aged German Christians*; for, alas, the younger members of their families, for want of English preaching, had generally joined the Congregational church, which had been gathered by the new comers in 1807, under the ministry of the Rev. John R. Cutting. But the old settlers, and some few of their immediate descendants, were a staid generation, not excitable, or effected by what they denominated new-light doctrine and preaching, and imagined that they could not understand the preaching of the Gospel in any other than the German language. Hence, they insisted on the suicidal policy, to have all the services of the church exclusively in German, making no provision for the firstlings of the flock, who, by association with their English-speaking neighbors, had gradually lost the knowledge of their mother tongue; and who, by this policy, were constrained, if they desired spiritual food, to leave the ancient fold, and feed in other pastures. Under these circumstances, it was impossible to infuse a younger and more vigorous element into the slumbering and dying

energies of the Church; and Mr. Starman was destined to labor comparatively in vain, and to spend his strength for naught.

But one thing he was enabled to do. From the first organization of the church, the Lutherans and German Reformed, who composed it, were accustomed to have the Lord's Supper administered to them separately. Though this did not accord with his views of Christian communion, he nevertheless continued the custom, for the sake of peace and harmony; always, however, giving a pressing invitation to the different parties to discard their prejudices, and lovingly to unite in partaking of the sacred feast. At first, few complied with the invitation, but the number gradually increased, until on the 17th of June, 1829, the separating wall was entirely taken away. At a meeting of the church members, held at that period, it was unanimously resolved, that the different parties would hereafter commune together, according to a prescribed form; and from that time forward, both classes approached the Lord's table together, as one undivided family, in the unity of the Spirit, and in the bonds of peace.

A citizen of Waldoborough describes one of these joyful occasions, which must have been peculiarly interesting and impressive. He speaks of the "tottering monuments of the early days, of the first settlers of Broad Bay," surrounding the sacramental board—of Conrad Heyer, who for more than seventy years, occupied a conspicuous seat in the singing gallery, both in the old log meeting house, at the Cove, and then at the church now dilapidated and in ruins, about three quarters of a mile from the village,"*—but he says nothing of those, who in the bud and blossom of their years, had consecrated themselves to the service of the Master—for alas, they were not there with their parents, to eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. And how can a church flourish, when the natural sources of its increase and vitality are cut off? For though the pastor had now, for some time, been permitted to preach occasionally in English, yet from his imperfect knowledge of the language, the want of fluency in the delivery of his sermons, or some other cause, he failed to attract the young, though they universally respected him, or to bring any of the wanderers back again into the ancient fold.

* Maine His. Soc. Collec., vol. V. p. 409.

The Rev. Mr. Starman, was a man of faith, and a man of prayer, but he could not work miracles; and little short of a miracle could save the decaying church at Waldoborough, from the dissolution which awaited it.

My first acquaintance with this man of God, was at the Synod of our Ministerium, in August, 1823. He was then upwards of fifty years of age, unmarried, and so bashful and diffident, that he avoided rather than sought the society of the gentler sex; and probably he would have gone through life, wanting that blessing of the Lord, *a good wife*, but for the intervention of his congregation; who, believing that it was not good for him to be alone, and that his efficiency as a pastor would be increased, by his having a *helpmeet* from among the daughters of the land, took the matter into their own hands so completely, as not only to designate who should be his bride, but also, to negotiate with her family and herself, as to the terms and conditions of the marriage.* And though "matrimony is a matter of more worth than to be dealt in by attorneyship," he cheerfully acquiesced in the arrangement, and in due time, the parties, to their mutual satisfaction, were firmly united in the silken tie.

This, no doubt, contributed greatly to his usefulness at the time, and, as I can testify from personal observation, was a source of comfort and happiness to him, in his declining years. And much did he need careful nursing and kind attention in his old age. For I found him a perfect wreck of his former self, afflicted with erysipelas, almost blind, and nearly helpless; yet, the same simple-hearted, prayerful, God-fearing, and God-loving man as ever. Never shall I forget the gleam of joy, which illumined his aged countenance, as I alighted from the stage coach, and entered his humble dwelling. His troubles now seemed to be over, the desire of his heart to be gratified. His people were once more to be gathered in the old church, and to hear the Gospel from the lips of a Lutheran minister. Immediate arrangements were made for religious services, on every day of the limited period of my visit. On Friday evening I preached in a neighboring school house; and such an audience of aged men and women, my eyes had never before beheld. At the close of the services, which were listened to with rapt attention, they clus-

*Maine His. Soc. Collec., vol. V. p. 409.

tered round me, and had I been the President of the United States, I could not have received a more hearty greeting, while they hailed with joy the proposition I made, in behalf of the Ministerium, that we would send them a minister, provided they would aid in his support, by the contribution of one hundred and fifty dollars annually. On the following afternoon I addressed the congregation again, at the house of Conrad Heyer, the first born among the settlers at Broad Bay, who, although one hundred and one years old, was as brisk and active as a man of fifty; and who, according to his wont, for more than eighty years, acted as chorister, and led us in a hymn of praise, reading without spectacles the small print of Watts' duodecimo Hymn Book, and singing even the highest notes, with scarcely any of the tremulousness of age. But Sunday was the great day of the feast; for all the settlers far and near, to the third and fourth generations, crowded to the dilapidated church, on foot, and in all kinds of ancient vehicles. The aged pastor was there wrapped in flannels, having been carefully conveyed thither by one of his attentive deacons—the little remnant of his flock was there, ancient men and women not a few, having for the most part passed three score years and ten, fondly recalling the days of their youth, when they kept holy day together, and had gone to the house of God in company. After two services in the old church, and a third, in the Baptist meeting house in the village, the congregation was dismissed to meet on Monday afternoon, to listen to another sermon, and learn the result of the effort which was being made to comply with my proposition, and secure the services of a minister. At that meeting it was announced, that the committee appointed for that purpose, after the most strenuous efforts, had been able to secure only between fifty and sixty dollars; and the amount of a collection taken on the spot, for my expenses, which they insisted on defraying, was only one dollar and thirty-one cents. It was not, that they did not desire the services of a Gospel minister. It was not because they were penurious; for I doubt not, that each one subscribed to the full extent of his ability. But it was because, for the most part, they were almost entirely destitute of the means of comfortable living, and had absolutely nothing to spare from their scanty earnings.

Under these circumstances, as the feeble few were una-

ble to supply even the necessary clothing for a pastor, and as there was no material in the settlement which might be counted on for the resuscitation and growth of the congregation, they came to the unanimous conclusion to disband their organization, and seek a spiritual home in the neighboring Congregational Church, where since the disability of their pastor they had been fed, and in whose communion many of their children were already numbered. Though with great reluctance, I could not but acquiesce in their decision; and commending them to God and to the word of his grace, the parting prayer was offered, the farewell hymn sung, and we separated, to meet no more, until assembled

“Where congregations ne'er break up
And Sabbaths ne'er shall end!”

Nearly twenty years have elapsed since that memorable visit, and time has wrought its usual changes. That aged pastor, who died in 1854, in his eighty-second year, and that ancient band of pilgrims, who clung to him to the last, have all gone to join the general assembly and church of the first born, whose names are written in heaven. The afflicted minister's agonizing prayers for his people are turned into joyful songs of praise for their deliverance from these earthly tabernacles, and their exaltation to the city which hath foundations, and the house not made with hands—Old Conrad Heyer, clothed in immortal youth, is singing the song of Moses and the Lamb—and nothing remains on earth to mark the place of their sojourn, and the Church of our fathers in the State of Maine, but the dilapidated ruins of the house, in which they once worshipped God—and the tall marble column in the neighboring graveyard, erected by the noble liberality of the citizens of Waldoborough, which tells the passing traveller, that *Here lie the remains of the sainted Rity and Starman, the once able and efficient pastors of the German Lutheran Church of Broad Bay!*

Gentlemen and Brethren of the Historical Society! This painful history, will not have been presented to you in vain, if we will only learn the important lessons which it teaches: How utterly futile is the attempt to build up a little Germany in America.

How surely an isolated church, using exclusively the German language, surrounded by an English speaking

population, and receiving no accessions from the Fatherland, must die out in the course of three or four generations. And above all

How absolute is the necessity of a perfect union and communion of the German and English element, in our ecclesiastical councils, if we would attain to that position in this land, which of right to us belongs as the first pure Protestant Church of the Reformation. For this union I have always contended. This has been one of the objects of my life and labors. This should be the burden of our prayers, before the throne of heavenly grace. And though late developments in our beloved Zion, may seem to have deferred this desirable event, it will come. It *must* come, or the Lutheran Church in the United States will be numbered, like the Church in the State of Maine, among "the things that were."



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